(b) if so, the salient features of the recommendations made by the Committee in its report; and

(c) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Committee has made 64 main recommendations on the terms of reference covering (i) making the Civil Service responsive and citizen-friendly, transparent, accountable and ethical in its actions and interface with the people; (ii) making the Civil Service e-governance friendly; (iii) putting a premium on intellectual growth of civil servants and on upgrading their domain knowledge; (iv) protecting the Civil Service against wrongful pressure exerted by administrative superiors, political executive, business interests and other vested interest; (v) changes, if any necessary, in the various All India Services Rules and Central Civil Service Rules to provide a statutory cover to the proposed Civil Service Reforms; (vi) changes in rules governing the disciplinary proceedings against civil servants to decentralize the process as far as practicable, and to make the disposal of such proceedings time-bound; and (vii) matters relating to health insurance, dispute resolution etc.

(c) The Committee has submitted its report recently. The recommendations made by the Committee are being examined with regard to their implementation.

Death of lab animals at ITRC, Lucknow

*446. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether due to failure of air conditioning system in June last about 700 lab animals died in the newly constructed modern laboratory of Industrial and Toxicology Research Centre of CSIR at Lucknow;

(b) if so, whether the cause of the failure of air-conditioning system has been investigated, if so, the details thereof;

(c) the extent of financial loss caused to the research centre due to the incident; and

(d) the action taken to prevent such incidents and also against those found negligent in the discharge of their duty in this incident?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. During the night of 24th and 25th June, 2004, there was a storm and heavy rain in Lucknow, the trees at Gheru campus of ITRC were uprooted and fell on the overhead electric supply and telephonic lines resulting in total breakdown of power supply and communication. Upon investigation, it was revealed that in the night, power supply through generator could not be restored as stand-by generator could not be switched on due to ingress of excessive moisture in the main circuit breaker. On next morning a total of 674 rodents and 3 guinca pigs were found dead in the cages in animal house. Out of these, 176 rodents were adults (79 rats and 97 mice). The rest 498 were suckling pups of rats and mice. None of them were big animals.

(c) These animals were housed for acclimatization and breeding purpose. The estimated financial loss due to the unforeseen incident is Rs. 10,800/-

(d) In addition to normal Power Corporation supply and 125 K.V. backup generator, another 125 K.V. generator is being connected to the animal house to feed air-conditioning and Air Handling Unit (AHU). Meantime, to meet any eventuality a hired 50 KVA DG set is kept ready to feed power supply to animal house for running the blower of A.H.U. and split air conditioners.

Also, the animal house maintenance sub-committee has been asked to periodically meet and review the facilities, conduct mock drills for preparedness to handle any unforeseen events. The incident was not due to the failure of discharge of duty by any of the officials.

Release of Indian hostages/captives in Iraq

†447. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a state of confusion prevailed regarding release of Indian hostages in Iraq only due to the evasive policy of Government;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.